Mortimer Mudd Experiments With the Shocking Shimmy

HALED home to New York in August by the stern Prunella Pitt, his sister-in-law and the self-constituted guardian of his decorum, Mortimer, like a philosopher, refrained from sighing for the lost seductiveness of Lake Pinewhisper, and resolved to take up in a serious, sociological way the study of the tribal customs of those, to him, mysterious beings, the midsummer denizens of Manhattan. Behold him beginning his studies at a quiet little dance—attended, of course, by the "Hinkey Pinkey" chorus. He has given Miss Pitt the slip. (Fancy dear Prunella in decollete and one of those top hats!) Mortimer reads the papers. He knows that the Shimmy shiver is a burning sociological question of the hour. His theory of research is that experience teaches. (The role of Experience, in this revised version of "Everywoman" has been assumed by Miss Queenie La Tour.)

Mortimer is apt—apt to try almost anything once, in the absence of Prunella! The Shimmy appears to engross him, purely as a scientific problem, to be sure. Some one ought to have told him to take some one his own size. But the discrepancy doesn't disturb Miss La Tour, not while Mortimer's bankroll measures up to her girlish ideal!

Mortimer still cherishes the dream of taking the Hinkey Pinks to Paris in a flock of transatlantic hydroplanes.—Copyright 21st Century Press.

Behind the Scenes in Constantinople, the City With a Wayward Soul

Capt. Bott Tells How the Cauldron of Conspiracy Boiled With Plots and Counterplots During Four Exciting Months Preceding Turkish Armistice—Normal Life Invisible Under Melodrama of Graft, Intrigue and Murder

In the Twilight of the Turkish Empire

This is the final one of a series of articles by Capt. Alan Bott, R. A. F., who was captured by the Turks while flying with Gen. Allenby's Army of the Palestine. His amazing experiences as a Turkish prisoner of war are the basis for the present narrative, "In the Twilight of the Turkish Empire."

By CAPT. ALAN BOTT.

CONSTANTINOPLE, always a cauldron of conspiracy, simmered and boiled over with plot and counterplot during the four exciting months that preceded the Turkish armistice.

Dressed as a sailor from the Russian tramp steamer, moored in the Bosporus, that served as hiding place for another escaped officer and myself, I made frequent trips to the city; and always I heard from friends the details of some new intrigue, assassination, disappearance or species of graft. Normal life was invisible under a coating of fantastic melodrama.

Lack of patriotism, or rather lack of any consciousness of nationality, made the situation in Constantinople unlike that of any other city in the world. It was an unmixable mixture of races, creeds and beliefs, a jumble of peoples that nothing—not even hunger and misery—could ever mould into any sort of an entity. Turks, Greeks, Armenians, Jews and nondescript Levantines rubbed shoulders in the streets, but they had no more mass consciousness than the articles in a ten cent store.

Three-quarters of them, even of the very Turks, joined issue on one point—hatred of the Young Turk oppression. A majority of this majority went so far as to long for the departure of the Germans and the arrival of the Allies. All but the Young Turk politicians and their intimates wanted an immediate peace.

Yet the population was too disunited and too listless to impress its wishes on the Government. A small minority of determined criminals, with the Grand Vizier and Enver Pasha at their head, were thus able to do as they pleased. Supported by German and Turkish troops and by the gendarmes, who delighted in the system of violence which filled their pockets with bribes, they hanged or imprisoned all opponents of the Ministry who were powerful enough to be noticed.

Among the Greeks, however, were many whose plottings helped the Allies. Several of them seemed well supplied with funds, which they used for propaganda or for fomenting discontent. Two revolutions were planned, but betrayal forestalled their outbreak, and the plots ended in a few hangings, a few imprisonments in the Ministry of War's "Black Hole," and a few disappearances into the submerged world where men walked cautiously, disguised and in the shadow. Other dwellers in the submerged world were many thousands of deserters and many hundreds of men "wanted" for sedition or graft.

To us, who were ourselves in hiding, this furtive life was amusingly apparent, and I always had a fellow feeling for a man at Taxim Gardens, let us say, who wore blue spectacles and as he sipped his coffee looked over their rims in search of gendarmes.

Beer and a False Beard.

Capt. Yeats-Brown was in a cafe off the Grande Rue de Pera, when a friend of a friend of his, after looking overmuch on the beer when it was iced, took off a false beard and laid it beside him on the table, in order to pay closer attention to his mug. There were several German soldiers in the cafe at the time, and Yeats-Brown watched with anxiety for developments. But the Germans, who were quite used to that sort of thing, paid no attention other than a few smiles.

Later that evening the same man—a deserter—was arrested for disorderly behavior. He procured his release by payment to the policeman of about $10; which was cheap enough, for he had no papers of identity.

The traffic in identity papers (*vecikas*) was a profitable business. A forged *vecika* cost anything from $50 to $100, and scores of them must have been made and sold each day. To buy off a policeman when unprovided with a *vecika* was more speculative. A solitary gendarme, alone in a dark street, might be content to accept $25; whereas two gendarmes together could be persuaded only with difficulty to accept $100, the dignity of their profession having to be maintained in face of each other.

For the rest the discontent, the misery and the destitution showed itself in occasional shots at Enver Pasha as his 60 horse-power Mercedes tore through the narrow streets of Pera and Galata, and in the spreading of pro-Ally rumors. The "Tatavla Agency," so named from a district inhabited by Greek merchants, was well known throughout 1918 as a centre of anti-German propaganda. From it, even at the time of Hindenburg's last great drive, there spread the wildest reports of allied victories. Some were concocted, no doubt, to influence the bourse, but the object of most of them was to encourage the starving population in their hopes for any sort of a peace.

In the dog days of last August, when the Sheikh of the Senoussi had just arrived to help the new Sultan in the girding on of his sword (a function corresponding to a coronation) the tide of sedition had risen to high water mark.

The Sheikh of the Senoussi, an elderly savage with more piety than learning, refused at the last moment to embark on the Austrian submarine which was to bring him to Europe from his Red Sea territory. Rumor declared that he had to be dragged on board by his Austrian friends while protesting violently against this contumely to his sacred person.

His experiences in that submarine, if half the stories were true, must have been remarkable indeed. How His Savage Highness clung to the periscope and insisted on watching the entrance into the Pola harbor, to the confusion of the navigator; how he spread his prayer mat before the crew's quarters, so that they could not get to their diving stations; and how, in the act of prostrating himself, he received a violent electric shock which caused him to perform the reverent motions of a leisured prayer in one galvanic gesture—these things belong to history as set forth by the Tatavla Agency.

The Sheikh, I believe, was disappointed by his visit to the Central Powers. First there was the chilly conspiracy of the submarine, which must have been unnerving to a dweller of the desert. Then the secret disembarkation at Pola, where a dingy, choppy sea and a wayward stomach combined to rob him of dignity. And finally the dismal disillusionment of Constantinople.

With the Shereef of Mecca in revolt, the Sheikh of the Senoussi was now the second dignitary of "loyal" Islam, and as such he had been chosen for the ceremony of girding the new Sultan with the sword of Othman, an act symbolical of the assumption of the Caliphate, and its defence of Mohammedanism. For some time, however, the Sultan refused to undergo this solemn rite, saying very rightly that there was no use in undertaking to defend Islam unless he were given real power to do so. For the late Sultan had been but a puppet, dancing to strings pulled by Enver Pasha, Talaat Pasha and the blood and iron Germans.

Enver Pasha then called on the Sheikh of the Senoussi, attended by all the trappings of peacock pomp and very real power. Exactly what passed at this interview is not known, but it is believed that the Sheikh was given the alternative of instantly leaving Constantinople by submarine or of inducing his suzerain to proceed with the coronation ceremony. Rather than undertake any more journeys under the sea the Sheikh prevailed on the Sultan to allow him to gird the historic sword upon his person. The ceremony cost the Sultan nothing, after all. The true defence of Islam lay in the well being of its peoples; and neither the puppets nor the potentates of a day could prevail against Kismet. . . .

The peace parties had been waiting for a leader; and when the old Sultan, who had been but a marionette dancing to the strings of Talaat and Enver, died in July they hoped to find one in his brother, the successor to the throne. The new Sultan certainly disliked the Germans and desired peace; but he was not a strong enough man to initiate a policy on his own account, and the Young Turk friends of Germany maintained their power by violence until the Bulgarian armistice gave the Sultan his chance.

Why the Sultan Did Nothing.

Had the Sultan ousted the Grand Vizier and Enver Pasha in July he would no doubt have found support, for the population detested the Young Turk Government. But Enver was still a power, and the constabulary of the city were faithful to him. Any attempt at disorder was promptly checked, and the Sultan, had he attempted to withdraw Turkey from the war before the Bulgarian armistice, would have risked his life and his throne, as well as the fate of his country.

Yet although he himself did not try, several of his subordinates did. One summer morning a young Turkish officer, in full uniform of the Palace Guards, was seen racing down the Grande Rue de Pera pursued by gendarmes. He had been accused of conspiracy against the Government, and although he was one of the intimates of the court, the Sultan did not defend him. If caught, a bullet, a rope or the Bosporus would be the best he could hope for. Something stickier and more lingering was more likely.

The Turkish officer ran like a hare down the winding street, doubled behind a tramway and bolted into the Turkish Officers Club, where he hoped to find sanctuary. But the club members wished to keep out of trouble. Talaat Pasha, they recollected, was perpetual vice-president of their house committee.

So the wretched victim, now pursued by members who, perhaps, still owed him for the last poker sitting, as well as by the gendarmes, dashed desperately into the card room. Having failed to lock the door, he passed behind the bar and after gulping down many dollars' worth of brandy (then almost unobtainable in Turkey), he dodged the policemen by slipping onto a balcony that overlooked the street.

And then what might have been part of an exciting motion picture play ended in tragedy. The poor conspirator jumped and fell forty feet to the pavement. A crowd collected on the tram lines and blocked the traffic. The broken body lay on the pavement until evening.

The only people that remained aloof from this amazing atmosphere of murder, bribery and intrigue were the German officers, who swaggered down the streets with their stays and their swords, completely unconscious of the ridicule which went on behind their corseted backs. They glared haughtily through their pince-nez, but seemed to see nothing of the city's hatred.

Their complacency remained undisturbed until a few days before the armistice. Then, indeed, their downfall was as great as their earlier pride. They were beaten in the streets, hooted and reviled in many languages. They suffered greatly by comparison with the British officers who first landed. For one thing the English had plenty of money, whereas the Germans had little. The British landed with walking sticks and pipes and fox terriers and without the suggestion of arrogance—a pleasant contrast to the swords, the much-in-evidence revolvers and the pompousness of the Boches. The population expressed their sense of the difference by cheering the arrivals and throwing rotten vegetables at the departures, who for three years had been so unwelcome.

The behavior of the people on November 1, when the news of the Turkish armistice was published, provided an interesting study in psychology.

It was a radiant autumn morning. From the veranda of his hiding place opposite the deserted British embassy Capt. Yeats-Brown watched the news spreading from mouth to mouth. There were cries and hand shakings. Newspaper boys were surrounded and mobbed. A fruit seller suddenly shut up his shop. A woman ran down the street shouting the good news.

Then from an English house near by, on a flagstaff prepared overnight, a Union Jack was displayed. It was the first allied standard shown in the streets of Pera since 1914. Some one cheered, and a number of Greeks were seen rushing into their houses. Was it a panic? A massacre? Revolution? But no, they were presently reassured. One by one, from every window and every rooftop, the colors of the Entente appeared—Greek flags, French flags, British flags, Italian flags, but never a sign of the Turkish crescent or the Boche eagle.

A few extracts from the press of Constantinople on that day may help to paint the scene:

"Uber Alles is dead because it represented a vulgar and commercial ideal and came face to face with newer and better ideas."

"Every one is awaiting the Ententistes' arrival. We are in a hurry to salute them, to carry them in triumph through our streets as apostles of liberty. At last we are able to breathe. No more detectives to demand our papers, no more beating of drums, no more communiqués no more vecikas! Air, air, air! We can go out after 10 o'clock, and go out without being followed. Every one is wearing the favors of red, white and blue. They decorate every buttonhole, like proud medals."

Proud medals indeed! thought the cynical prisoners of war. A month earlier the writers of these effusions had been licking German shoe leather and the taste of the jackboot was yet in their mouths.

Some of the officer prisoners, released from the Ministry of War when the news of armistice arrived, were the first targets for Constantinople's joyful exuberance. Wearing their carefully hoarded uniforms, they strolled from Stamboul across the Golden Horn and took the subway to Pera. As soon as they appeared in the European quarters the population fell on them with kisses, hands shakings, gifts and congratulations. Men and women of every nationality showered invitations on them and several were carried down the Grande Rue de Pera.

Truly Constantinople is a strange city, the most fickle on earth, a city with as many moods as an attractive but unstable woman. It is not at all difficult, indeed, to invest Constantinople with a sex and personality. Some magic in her aspect, some trick of sea and sun, gives her a human quality hard to describe. She is a city apart—a city with a wayward soul. We who have known her intimately, and from our hiding places watched her sway from mood to mood, cannot fail to realize this. And yet, withal, it is part of her charm.

Constantinople ruined the Byzantine Greeks and sapped the strength of the Roman Empire. Now, after a long period of fretful wedlock, she is shaking herself free from the Turk. Whoever next attempts to rule her—whether it be Briton, American, Greek, or some form of condominium—will have some restless days and nights.

The Famous Lion of Belfort

ON guard at the French frontier stands the Lion of Belfort. Now cut out of enduring stone, he was once modelled from snow.

In the Franco-Prussian war the siege of Belfort lasted from November, 1870, to February, 1871. Among the garrison were thousands of reserve troops, among whom there were not a few artists and other professional men. From time to time during the winter the men, to amuse themselves, made statues in the snow. Then the sun would shine and there would be no more statues.

Among the garrison was the man who gave to America her heroic figure of liberty, Bartholdi, the sculptor. One day he modelled a lion from snow, and the half frozen soldiers, as they looked with pride and delight on what the sculptor had wrought, with renewed courage cried: "Now the Germans can never enter France from this direction, for here stands the Lion of Belfort!" And the Germans never did.

When an armistice was declared by order of the French Government the garrison capitulated with all honors of war. Under the terms of peace France retained Belfort.

Once again Bartholdi modelled the lion. On the rock in front of the citadel, rearing himself on his forelegs, stands this noble figure. He is thirty-six feet high and seventy-two long. In Paris there is a replica in hammered copper, also by Bartholdi. And the square or place on which the replica looks down is called the Place Danfert-Rochereau, in honor of the brave Lieutenant-Colonel of that name who commanded the garrison of Belfort in 1870.

The Brick Snake

"IN a city book store the other day," said a country born man, "I saw standing on end on a long table, and maybe three or four inches apart, a long row of books I was buying a book at that table, and as it was being wrapped up something upset the end book in that long row. It fell against the next book and that against the next one, and so, swiftly and smoothly, they all toppled over one after another until the whole row was down. It made me smile, it brought to mind the fun we used to have with bricks in my youth.

"This is a sport that I do not remember ever to have seen practised in New York because here there is less freedom of space and here it would be dangerous in the busy streets, but in the smaller city that I came from wherever there was a new building going up it was a common thing for boys to stand up long lines of bricks on end a little distance apart and then by toppling over the end one, the key brick, so to speak, make the whole row go down.

"Small boys used to be satisfied to make straight rows of this sort and they found much pleasure in that, but bigger boys soon learned to make sweeping curves, and finally to make lines with severe curves, like a letter S, regular brick snakes.

"They soon discovered that to make a brick snake work all right the bricks must be nicely spaced, otherwise, on a sharp curve, a brick might fall outside the line and so the whole line might not go down. It had another pleasure of a rare achievement when a boy could set up a long brick snake that would wriggle smoothly and completely from head to tail."